

Appl. No. : 10/072,539
Filed : February 8, 2002

REMARKS

Claims 1-59 were pending in the present application. By way of the present amendment, Applicant amended Claim 1 by incorporating the subject matter of dependent Claim 16, and cancelled Claim 16. Likewise, Applicant amended Claim 17 by incorporating the subject matter of Claim 29 and cancelled Claim 29. Finally, Applicant amended Claim 30 by incorporating the subject matter of Claim 44 and cancelled Claim 44.

Claim Objections

Claims 16, 29, and 44 were objected to as depending from rejected claims. By way of the present amendment, Applicant has incorporated the subject matter of objected to claims 16, 29, and 44 and any intervening claims into the respective independent claims. Claims 16, 29, and 44 have thus been cancelled.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-15, 17-28 and 30-43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Covington et al. (US 6517513 B1). In view of the present amendment, the outstanding rejections have been rendered moot. Accordingly, independent Claims 1, 17, and 30 are now in condition for immediate allowance, along with each of their respective dependent claims. In addition, each dependent claim recites a unique combination of features that defines over the prior art.

Although Applicant does not agree with the propriety of the outstanding rejections, the present amendments have been entered in order to facilitate allowance of the objected claims. Applicant may pursue the rejected claims in one or more continuing applications.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indicated allowability of Claims 16, 29 and 44 if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 17, and 30 accordingly. Applicant also thanks the Examiner for the indicated allowability of Claims 45-59 without amendment.

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CONCLUSION

Claims 1-15, 17-28, 30-43, and 45-59 remain pending for consideration. Based upon the Examiner's indication of allowability of claims, 16, 29, and 44-59 and in view of the present amendment, Applicant submits that all the pending claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests the same.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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